

# Waste - It's A Business Affair

## Why Should Your Business Care About Waste?

Preventing waste saves resources, prevents pollution, and saves money. It's just good business sense! Resource efficiency is a clear path to a improved bottom line and a more successful operating business. In addition, more consumers are responding by patronizing businesses that show a strong commitment to the environment. With those two thoughts in mind, it makes "dollars and sense" to start a new, or review your waste reduction program. All waste is lost profit. You pay to purchase excess supplies and materials and those that aren't used efficiently become waste; then you pay to collect them and haul that waste away.

## Your Business Can Make A Difference!

California faces an enormous solid waste disposal challenge. Every year approximately 45 million tons of garbage are generated and over half of that comes from business and industry. Cities and counties are required by law, to reduce the amount of waste going to landfills by the year 2000 by 50 percent.

## "Green" Business - More than One Meaning!

If waste reduction goals are to be fully realized in your community, business must lead the way. You can improve your bottom line through more efficient operations as well as change the habits and practices of your customers and employees. More than ever, consumers are responding by patronizing businesses that show a strong commitment to the environment.

Many corporations are dedicating resources and personnel to the development of resource management programs. Integrated waste management, or waste reduction, is the combined effort of activities such as waste prevention, reuse, recycling, and composting:



- **Waste Prevention** Although this may be a new term for some businesses, it is not a new concept. Waste Prevention is any practice which causes a net reduction in the generation of waste. Simply put, waste prevention reduces the amount or toxicity of waste generated through the more effective use of resources.
- **Reuse** Many so-called waste items can be used again. Some examples are plastic pails, fiber drums, packing materials such as foam peanuts, cardboard boxes, mailing tubes, etc.
- **Composting** Composting is the biological decomposition of organic materials such as leaves, grass clippings, brush, and food waste into a soil amendment.
- **Recycling** Recycling is defined as the process of collecting, sorting, cleansing, treating, and reconstituting materials that would otherwise become solid waste.

# Waste - Where to Begin?

## Step 1 - Choosing Your Resource Management Coordinator

**Select an employee to coordinate waste management activities.**

Establish a team that includes management and staff. Select an organized, enthusiastic, creative person as the Resource Management Coordinator.

**The Coordinator's primary responsibilities include:**

- Preventing waste by purchasing reusable, durable, and repairable equipment and supplies.
- Working with suppliers to reduce packaging.
- Reuse items and altering other waste generating activities wherever possible.
- Targeting materials for composting and recycling, and working with your waste hauler or recycling company to arrange costs, pickup schedules, and other program specifics.
- Setting up a collection bin system in common work areas.
- Locating storage areas and developing a system for moving materials to storage areas.
- Networking with other businesses and local government staff, attending training and seminars on waste management if possible, and subscribing to waste management publications.
- Promoting waste reduction awareness in the workplace.
- Monitoring, evaluating, and changing the system as needed.



## Step 2 - Winning Organizational Support Management Support

The potential for successful employee participation is greater when there is enthusiastic support by management. Sell the program ideas to your employees so they become dedicated and involved in the effort.

## Step 3 - Estimating Your Waste Reduction Potential

To develop an effective program, conduct a “waste evaluation” to estimate your waste reduction potential and understand existing waste management practices. A waste evaluation identifies the materials generated and their path through your facility from point of purchase to ultimate disposal.

- **Where does the waste come from and what is recoverable?** Walk through your facility and note how and where waste is generated. What waste can be prevented, reused, or recycled? Different businesses will generate different types of preventable, reusable, or recyclable materials. For example, an administrative office may generate white office paper while a retail outlet may generate large amounts of corrugated cardboard.
- **What materials are commonly purchased and discarded?** Ask purchasing and maintenance staff about current purchasing and disposal practices to get a better idea of the flow of materials through your facility and the types of waste being generated. Interview your landscaper/groundskeeper or other responsible staff about “green waste” (grass clippings, leaves, etc.) and potential opportunities for reduction through composting, mulching or “grasscycling.”
- **Understand your waste hauling system.** It is important to know who your waste hauler is and to understand your existing waste hauling system.



## Step 4 - Finding the Right Vendor to Provide Recycling Services

**Contact your existing waste hauler about recycling.** Recycling is more cost-effective when integrated with existing waste removal operations. Often, businesses can reduce disposal costs and sometimes even earn revenue from the sale of separated recyclables.

In addition to waste hauling companies, there are a number of private recycling companies that offer business programs. These services may include providing recycling containers, shredding of confidential and restricted documents, as well as promotion and education for your employees.

**The following list of questions will help you locate a vendor for your recyclables.**

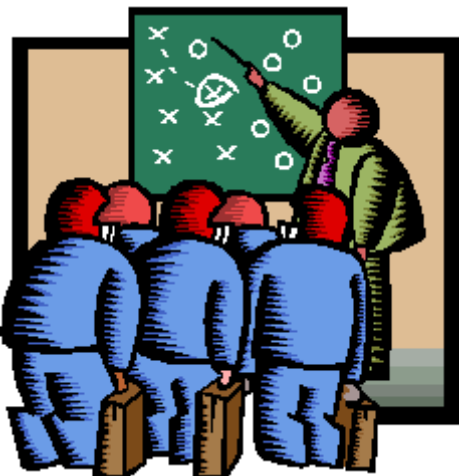
- What materials does the vendor accept for recycling?
- How should the materials be separated?
- Is there a minimum amount required for a pick-up?
- Will the vendor pay for the recyclables?
- Will the vendor assist with education and related promotional efforts?
- Will the vendor supply recycling containers to use throughout the workplace?
- Will the vendor supply large bins for the main storage area?
- How will pick-ups be arranged? Scheduled? On-call?
- Does the vendor offer shredding services for confidential materials?
- Does the vendor have references?

## Step 5 - Setting Up Your Program

- **Set up a reuse area.** Make reusable items available to customers, or donate them to a school or charitable organization.
- **Establish a composting or grasscycling program.** If your business produces “green” waste, such as plant or lawn clippings, consider composting the materials on site or use the materials as mulch for landscape plants.
- **Analyze the costs and benefits of waste prevention activities.** Analyze the purchase costs, labor costs, utility costs, and disposal costs of waste prevention activities such as purchasing longer-lived, durable, or repairable supplies and equipment.
- **Choose appropriate recycling containers.** The size and style of recycling equipment varies. Will the hauler or recycler provide containers? Many recycling containers are made of recycled materials, so purchase and use them whenever possible.
- **Locate and label workspace recycling bins strategically.** To encourage participation among employees and to avoid contamination recyclables, it helps to place recycling bins in all heavy traffic areas, common work areas, and most importantly, in locations where the recyclables are typically generated. Recycling bins near copy machines and desktop containers for office paper, as well as larger, leak-resistant, recycling bins for bottles and cans in cafeteria areas are typical examples.
- **Storage areas and collection procedures.** Your hauler or recycler will assist you in setting up the main storage area so that both trash and recycling dumpsters are accessible for pick-up crews and any heavy equipment that may be needed for unloading and loading operations.



## Step 6 - Educating and Motivating Employees



An announcement, supported by the company’s owner or senior officer, highlighting the benefits of waste reduction and outlining separation and collection procedures, is a key element to informing employees of new procedures and soliciting participation.

- **Establish a contact for waste management questions and information.**

It is important to have an outlet for questions and information. The waste management coordinator is most familiar with the details and logistics of the program and is the most appropriate person to handle questions from other employees. Employee training is essential for a successful program. New employees

should receive training when hired. Use posters and other training materials to promote information to employees. Incentives such as contests and prizes will help ensure success. Give credit and recognition to employees for their efforts.

## Step 6 - Educating and Motivating Employees

- **Follow-up publicity.** It is important to continually publicize the success of your waste reduction efforts and address any shortcomings. Success encourages continued participation. Information about quantities of waste prevented and recycled, revenue earned, and disposal costs savings should be shared with staff.



## Step 7- Purchasing with Waste Prevention in Mind.

- **Buy products that are reusable, durable, repairable, and recyclable.**
- **Buy products with recycled content.** Business purchases of recycled-content products are extremely important to develop and maintain markets for the increasing quantity of materials that will be diverted from landfill disposal.
- **Reduce packaging waste.** Tell your suppliers that you are interested in buying products that contain less packaging whenever feasible. Ask them to take back shipping boxes to reuse or recycle.



## Step 8 - Remember, Take Credit!

When your company recycles, uses products made of recycled material, and practices other waste reduction strategies, you're doing your part to preserve the environment. As an environmental leader in the community, you should take credit for this commitment and be recognized. Be sure to include "Printed on Recycled Paper" whenever you purchase and use recycled paper. Also, publish your efforts in company newsletters and periodicals.

The Waste Reduction Awards Program (WRAP) provides public recognition to California businesses that have made outstanding efforts to reduce and divert waste from landfills. Businesses compete against a set of criteria, rather than against each other. Practices that are evaluated include waste prevention, materials reuse, recycling, buying recycled, composting, and employee education. Call (916) 255-2497 for a WRAP application.

## Other Resources - Recycling Hotlines

These hotlines provide information about recycling locations and the materials you can recycle throughout California:



- **California Integrated Waste Management Board**  
1-800-553-2962

- **Division of Recycling**  
1-800-RECYCLE



# Waste Prevention Ideas!

Begin by assessing the products and equipment used and the waste generated by your business. Then identify ways to improve efficiency and eliminate waste. The ideas below can help you decide what waste prevention practices to adopt.

## Purchasing

- Establish purchasing guidelines to encourage waste prevention (durable, concentrated, reusable, high quality products).
- Consider length of warranty and availability of repair services when purchasing equipment.
- Use optical scanners, which give more details about inventory, allowing more precise ordering.
- Order supplies in bulk to reduce excess packaging.
- Order supplies by voice mail or electronic mail.
- Ask suppliers to minimize packaging on orders.
- Substitute less toxic materials for toxic materials (e.g., vegetable based inks, water based glue, markers, and paints).
- Request that deliveries be shipped in returnable containers.



## Packaging

- Eliminate unneeded packaging or layers of packaging.
- Use lightweight packaging.
- Use reusable boxes and mail bags for shipping to branch offices, stores, and warehouses.

## Packaging (con't)

- Return, reuse, or repair wooden crates, pallets and spools.
- Reuse packaging (e.g., foam peanuts, bubblewrap, and cardboard boxes) or find someone who can.
- Set up a system for returning cardboard boxes and foam peanuts to your distributors for reuse.
- Order merchandise with minimal packaging, in concentrated form and in bulk.



## Writing/Printing Paper

- Make double-sided copies whenever possible.
- Reuse envelopes or use two-way envelopes.
- Circulate memos, documents, periodicals, and reports rather than individual copies.
- Use voice or electronic mail or put messages on a chalkboard or central bulleting board.
- Make scratch pads from used paper.
- Use your outdated letterhead for in-house memos.
- Eliminate unnecessary forms. Double-side forms or redesign them to fit on a half sheet.
- Use narrow-ruled notebooks.
- Seek methods to reduce production errors.
- Save documents on floppy disks instead of making hard copies.
- Use central files for hard copies.
- Print more words on each page (e.g., smaller font, narrow margins).

# Waste Prevention Ideas!

## Writing/Printing Paper *(con't)*

- Proof documents on screen before printing.
- Print drafts on paper already printed on one side.
- Use same draft of report for corrections by several people.
- Donate old magazines and journals to hospitals, clinics, or libraries.
- Keep mailing lists current/one copy per address.
- Call or mail postcards directly to senders asking that your business be removed from mailing lists.
- Reduce advertising mail by writing to: Direct Marketing Assoc., Mail Preference Service, P.O. Box 3861, NY, NY 10164-4861. Ask that your business be eliminated from mailing lists.
- Accept final in-house documents with hand corrections.



## Over-Stocked & Exchangeable Materials

- Set up an area for employees to exchange used items.
- Advertise surplus and reusable waste items through a commercial waste exchange. CalMAX is a materials exchange network in California; services are available at no cost to users. Call (916) 255-2369 for a free catalog and materials listing form.

## Equipment

- Rent equipment that is used occasionally.
- Use remanufactured office equipment.
- Replace incandescent with fluorescent lights.
- Institute maintenance practices to prolong the use of copiers, computers, and other equipment.
- Invest in equipment that facilitates waste prevention such as:
  - High quality, durable, repairable equipment
  - Copiers and printers that make two-sided copies
- Install reusable heating, ventilation and air conditioning filters.
- Reclaim reusable parts from old equipment.
- Use recharged or rebuilt fax and printer cartridges.
- Sell or give old furniture and equipment to employees or donate it to a local charity.
- Find uses for worn tires, (e.g., landscaping, swings).
- Use retreaded tires on company vehicles. Rotate tires on a regular basis to prolong tire life. Keep tires properly inflated.



## Landscaping/Organics



Use a mulching mower or retrofit your mower and leave grass clippings on lawn (grasscycling).

- Use compost as a topsoil amendment or request your landscaper contractor to use it.

# Waste Prevention Ideas!

## Landscaping/Organics *(con't)*

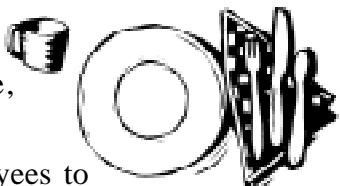
- Compost grass clippings and leaves or ask your landscaper to send trimmings to a composting facility (check with recycling coordinator about any composting requirements).
- Choose a landscape design that needs low maintenance and generates little waste (e.g., perennials, slow growing shrubs).
- Buy a chipper and turn tree and shrub clippings into mulch.

## Food and Personal Services *(con't)*

- Use reusable coffee filters or unbleached disposable filters.
- Reuse trash can liners or eliminate where possible.
- Consider using cloth roll towels, hot air dryers, large paper rolls in rest rooms or buy smaller/lighter sized paper towels.
- Provide condiments in bulk dispensers.

## Food and Personal Services

- Use durable towels, tablecloths, napkins, dishes, flatware, cups, and glasses.
- Encourage employees to bring their own mugs and utensils. Ask food vendor to offer discounts on beverages served in own mug.
- Buy company mugs; stop providing disposable cups.
- Encourage customers to take home extra food.
- Offer smaller portions. (e.g., child's menu).
- Arrange for food bank pick-up of unserved food.
- Sell or give food scraps to farmers who can process it for feed (check with local health and agricultural agencies).
- Compost vegetable food scraps. (Check with your recycling coordinator concerning local guidelines or restrictions.)
- Set up a worm bin at the office to convert your food wastes (banana peels, coffee grounds) into high quality potting soil (vermi-compost).



## Consumer Choices

- Teach your customers about the importance of reducing waste. Effective tools for getting across the message include: promotional campaigns, brochures and newsletters (remember to use recycled paper), banners, newspaper ads, product displays, store signs, and labels.
- Encourage customers to bring their own bag(s) and compliment them when they do.
- Offer customers a rebate when they reuse grocery bags, containers, mugs, and cups.
- Offer customers waste reduction choices:
  - Items in bulk or concentrate
  - Solar-powered calculators and flashlights
  - Durable merchandise
  - Repairable merchandise
  - Items in refillable bottle
- Encourage customers to return reusable items such as metal hangers to dry cleaners.
- Promote waste prevention through advertising.

For More Information on Starting a Business Waste Reduction and Recycling Program Contact: CIWMB, Business Resource Efficiency Program at (915) 255-2354.